Losses suffered by SAIL

2137. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the SAIL has suffered losses worth crores of rupees so for during the year 1998-99;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the factors responsible for such losses;

(c) whether Government have fixed any responsibility on such losses; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and further strategy adopted to check such losses?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI RAMESH BAIS): (a) and (b) Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) has suffered a loss of Rs. 890 crores in the current year upto December, 1998.

Main reasons for decline in profits include sluggish demand for steel, greater competition from imports arising due to lower international prices and enhancement in supplies in the domestic market resulting in decline in the net realisation from sales in the domestic market. Export prices have also declined in the international market.

While the benefits of modernisation would materrilise in phases, SAIL has to absorb higher capital related cost (interest and depreciation) because of capitalisation of modernised/capital schemes and also for maintaining a higher inventory level.

(c) and (d) Government have taken following steps to improve the profitability of steel industry and to overcome the present problems:—

(i) To boost the demand and consumption of steel, a National Campaign has been launched.

(ii) To reduce input costs for steel making, the special import duty on several inputs such as coking coal (ash content <12%), non-coking coal (ash content <12%), metallurgical coke, ferro nickel, charge nickel and nickel oxide sinters, low silica limestone and graphite electrodes (<28") has already been waived.

(iii) Anti-dumping duty on Hot Rolled Coils imported from Ukraine and Russia has been imposed.

(iv) Rationalization of Duty Entitlement Pass Book (DEPB) rates for steel exports have been carried out to boost exports.

(v) A Steel Exporters' Forum has been set up to help steel exporters overcome bottlenecks in exports.

(vi) Enhanced project financing to steel sector by All India Financial Institutions and relaxation of ECB norms has been recommended.

(vii) Government has set up an Empowered Committee to examine and assist specific Research and Development Projects to improve technology for steel making and enhance quality of Indian Steel.

(viii) Floor Prices have been fixed by the Government in December, 1998 to prevent the cheap imports of certain categories of steel.

SAIL has also taken the following steps for improving its performance:

* Greater emphasis on cost control measures.
* Introduction of Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS) for employees.
* Market oriented production and product-mix.
* Improvement in techno-economic parameters.
* Increasing sales through aggressive and customer oriented marketing.

* Exploring new ways to bridge the resource gaps through business restructuring initiatives.

Loans Taken by SAIL and TISCO from SDF

2138. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is fact that SAIL and TISCO have availed of big share of loans from Steel Development Fund;

(b) if so, what is the principal and interest thereof outstanding against each of them as on 31st December, 1998;

(c) the steps taken by Government to recover the same?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI RAMESH BAIS): (a) and (b) Loans have been granted from Steel Development Fund to Steel Authority of India Ltd., Tata Iron & Steel Company Ltd., Rastriya Ispat Nigam Ltd., and Indian Iron & Steel Company Ltd. for modernisation/expansion schemes of these Main Producers.

The details of principal and interest outstanding against SAIL and TISCO as on 31.12.98 was as under:

Sl.No.	Name of the Party	Outstanding cipal (Rs. in Crores)	Prin-Outstanding interest (Rs. in Crores)
1.	SAIL	762.96	430.82
2.	TISCO	911.64	76.57

(c) The repayment schedule of principal & interest of SDF loans depends upon the purpose for which the loans are granted. The terms & conditions of such loans are determind accordingly by the SDF Managing Committee. Recovery of SDF loans is being effected as per these terms & conditions.

खनिजों का निर्यात

2139. **श्री चीमनभाई हरीभाई शुक्ला:** क्या इस्पात और खान मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) आज की स्थिति के अनुसार सरकारी तथा गैर-सरकारी क्षेत्र द्वारा निकाले गए विभिन्न किस्मों के खनिजों का किन-किन देशों को निर्यात किया जा रहा है;

(ख) सरकार की निर्यात संबंधी नीति क्या है और इस नीति के अन्तर्गत इन खनिजों को निर्यात करने में कितना प्रोत्साहन मिल रहा है;

(ग) क्या वाणिज्य मंत्रालय ने खनिजों के निर्यात के लिए कोई विशेष पैकेज उपलब्ध कराया है; और

(घ) सरकार ने खनिजों के निर्यात को बढ़ावा देने में राज्य सरकारों के साथ अब तक क्या प्रयास किए हैं?

इस्पात और खान मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (श्री रमेश बैस): (क) से (घ) सूचना एकत्र की जा रही है और सभा पटल पर रख दी जाएगी।

Repealing of ULC Act

2140. SHRI V.N. GADGIL: Will the Minister of URBAN AFFAIRS AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to repeal of Urban Land Ceiling Act;

(b) what is the rationale for repeal;

(c) whether such a repeal will enormously help the Builders lobby; and

(d) whether Government will similarly advise State Governments to repeal Agriculture Land Ceiling Act?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF URBAN AFFAIRS AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI BANDARU DATTATREYA): (a) to (c)